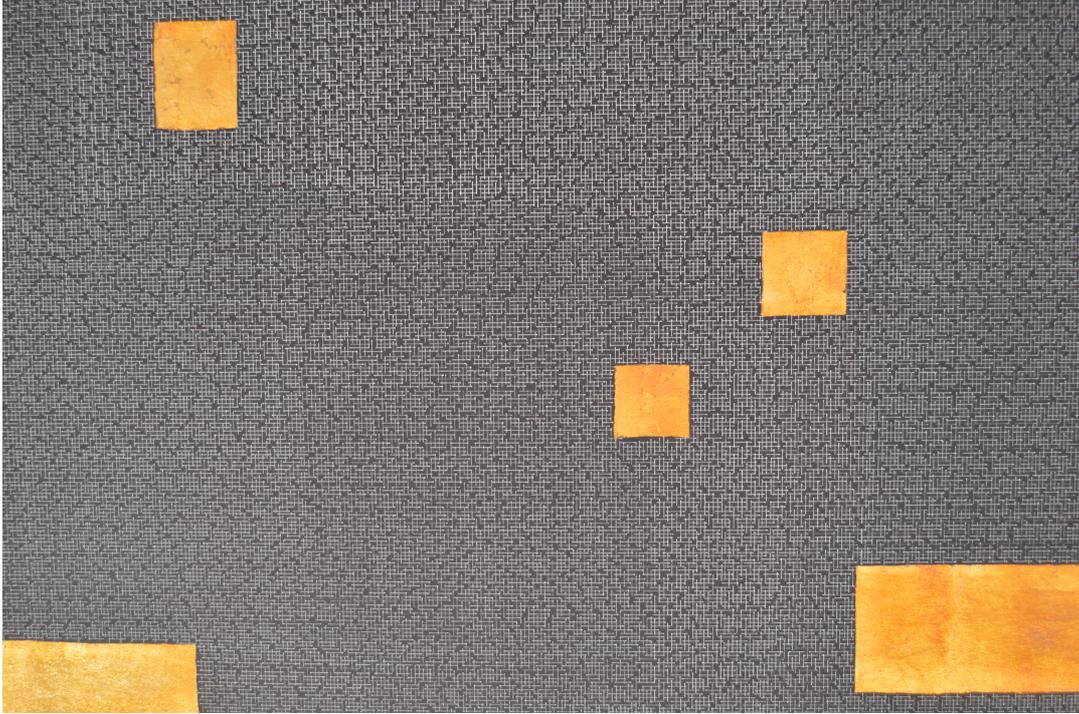


LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

SHAHZAD HASSAN GHAZI *Are We From The Same Ocean?*

September 18 - November 7, 2019



Shahzad Ghazi, *Build Sandcastle*, 2019, Pen on Wasli Paper, 69 x 52 cm

Leila Heller Gallery is pleased to present Shahzad Hassan Ghazi's debut solo exhibition in the UAE, "*Are We From The Same Ocean?*" opening September 18th, on view through November 7, 2019.

Shahzad Hassan Ghazi's practice draws upon his own meditation as well as the traditional practice of miniature painting embedded within his roots, creating contemporary ambient serenity with each artwork. Miniature painting, for Ghazi, is an innate and instinctive internal calling, perhaps from his ancestors, which he has revived and brought into contemporary art. Since 1947, Ghazi has noticed that many Pakistanis have let go of the practice of traditional miniature painting as it requires hard work, concentration, and time.

While his family, particularly his father, urged him to study science or literature, Ghazi found that he was able to physically translate this tradition into new mediums and experiment in other materials as a method of coping with the dilemma and frustration he faced when transferring such history into the contemporary world. Assembling construction through the use of dotted lines, realizing relationships between shapes and spaces, and physically connecting to his practice as a means of meditation, Ghazi practices concentration, repetition, mark making, while capturing the modern world.

The use of gold in the Ghazi's work is reminiscent of the use of such precious material in miniature paintings for details on Mughal Emperors crowns or elegant rugs throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth century. He brings this ancient traditional technique and royal material to the contemporary realm by incorporating it into his own artwork. However, it is not the traditional motifs often found in miniatures that the artist aims to capture – rather, he is portraying his own splendid vision of the world as he experiences it living in the Middle East. He often sees sand which is tinged with sunlight, giving an effect of shimmery lighting and a precious feeling and thus, the artist relates to the memories he has of interacting with miniatures, bringing it to his own practice.

His series exhibited in Dubai is a personal connection of the artist to the spirit of the ocean and the moods of the waves, capturing the infinite color variations that the sun casts upon the everchanging Gulf. Through reconstructed shapes, the artist creates a new impossible reality while searching and examining his monotonous immediate surrounding and the beauty that radiates beyond.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Shahzad Hassan Ghazi was born in 1983 in Lahore, Pakistan. In 2002 he began studying art and in 2003 he began studying miniature painting, eventually becoming a master at the dying traditional practice. By 2005, he had completed his studies and began working at artist studios before studying art at Beaconhouse under the guidance of Rashid Rana and Salima Hashmi. Ghazi believes that the practice of creating miniatures is engrained in his DNA, and after 1947, many Pakistani people abandoned this part of their heritage. Ghazi lives and works in Dubai, UAE and uses his art as a personal meditative practice in order to find balance and realize relationships spatially as well as interpersonally. He has dedicated his career to revitalizing the ancient traditions embedded within his own heritage and bringing them into the contemporary art world.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Since its establishment over three decades ago in New York, Leila Heller Gallery has gained worldwide recognition as a pioneer in promoting creative dialogue and exchange between Western artists and Middle Eastern, Central and Southeast Asian artists. It has garnered a reputation for identifying and cultivating the careers of artists leaving a lasting impact on contemporary art and culture. Currently representing a diverse roster of Western and Middle Eastern artists, the gallery is also active in the American, European and Middle Eastern secondary art markets. In November 2015, Leila Heller Gallery opened its first international location in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. At 14,000 square feet, the state of the art gallery features three exhibition spaces, making it the largest gallery in the UAE. Showcasing leading regional and international artists, many of whom will be presenting their work in the Middle East for the first time, the gallery is dedicated to supporting the evolving practice of established artists.

Press Inquiries: For more information, images and prices, please contact clemence@leilahellergallery.com